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## Preserving the heritage of humanity? Obtaining world heritage status and the impacts of listing

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## ***Chapter 2***

### ***Practising world heritage***

The question of whether or not the world's 'best' heritage sites are inscribed on the world heritage list is first answered by doing quantitative analyses by country and continent. The analyses deal with the nomination process, the dynamics of the list, and the global spatial distribution of sites. It appears that countries play a significant role in the nomination and management of world heritage sites. Focus on the dominant role that a country can play in world heritage affairs clearly indicate that the most fruitful approach is to study the selection of sites and the impact of listing in specific countries.

#### ***2.1 The nomination process***

The world heritage convention is international in character, but the nomination of potential sites starts at the national level. A country is the only body that can nominate sites (figure 2-1). The first step is to compose a tentative list of sites that might be nominated in the next five or ten years. A single person or various working groups and advisory councils can compose this list. Mayors, district governments or heritage experts may only make proposals for inclusion on the tentative list. Sites are only officially nominated when a country hands in a complete nomination document at the World Heritage Centre in Paris. This document should explain which site is nominated, why this site possesses outstanding universal value, how its quality relates to other more or less similar properties, and how it is managed.

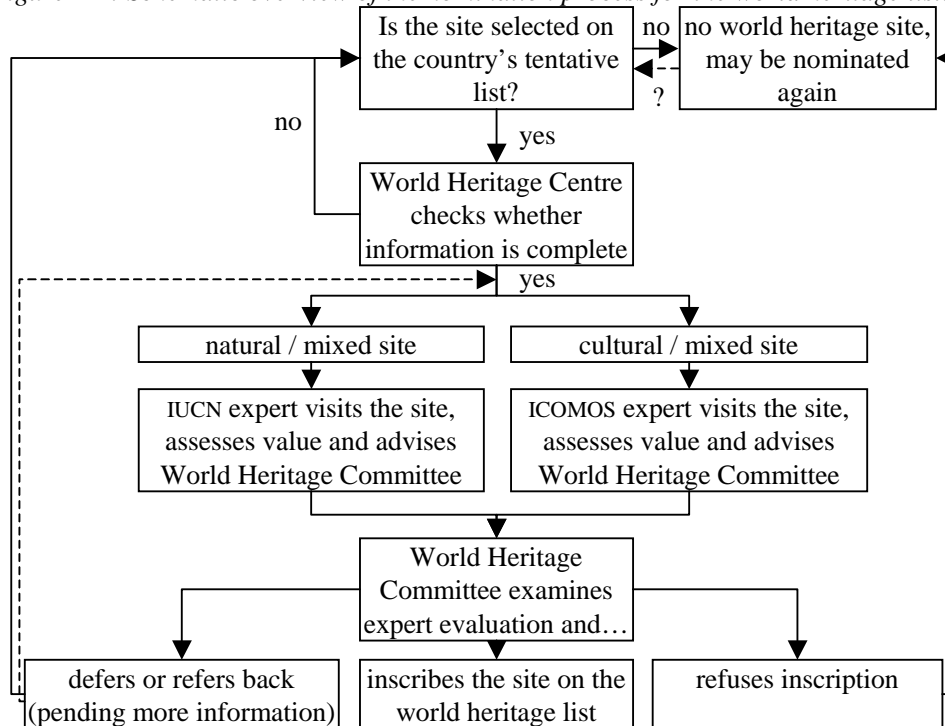
The World Heritage Centre checks whether the information is complete. Depending on whether the site is natural or cultural in character, an expert from the World Conservation Union (IUCN) or the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) assesses the quality of the site. An expert appraiser writes a report on the quality of the site, the way it is managed and makes a recommendation on whether or not to include the site in the world heritage list. The report is sent to the World Heritage Committee – consisting of twenty-one, rotating country representatives – that takes the final decision (see appendix 2 for overview committee). The decision of the World Heritage Committee has hardly ever differed from IUCN's or ICOMOS's recommendation. Sites that are referred back at any stage of the trajectory or that have been rejected by the committee can be nominated again.

Countries have been asked to hand in a tentative list to facilitate IUCN's and ICOMOS's comparison with other, potential world heritage sites. The aggregate of all tentative lists would be helpful to discern the "obscure, but very significant sites" from the ones that do not meet the criterion of outstanding universal value (Charleton 1989: 15).

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Countries can update their tentative list at any time. Most countries have acted reservedly on the request to hand in a tentative list. In 1997, Pocock (1997a: 266) mentioned that less than half of the countries participating in the convention had submitted a tentative list. This number increased to sixty-eight percent in January 2000 (Smith 2000a: 400) and to sixty-nine percent in 2002. Some tentative lists are quite outdated by now, such as that by the United States of America (Araoz 2002: 7).

Figure 2-1: Schematic overview of the nomination process for the world heritage list.



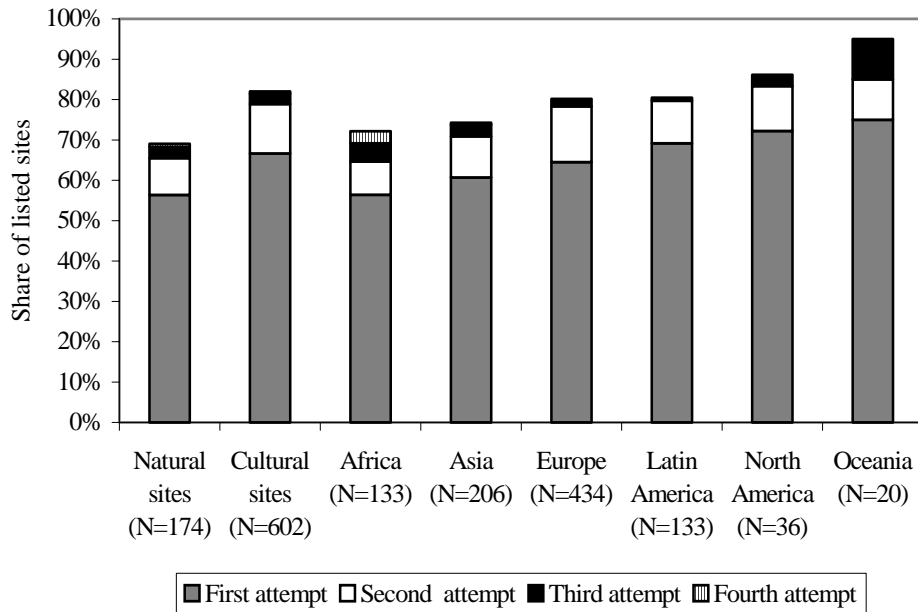
Source: UNESCO (2004a), adapted.

### 2.1.1 Rejections, re-nominations and their reasons

Cultural sites have a significantly higher chance of inscription on the world heritage list than natural sites. Between 1978 and 2003, eighty-two percent of the nominated cultural sites (602 sites) and sixty-nine percent of the nominated natural sites (174 sites) have been designated (figure 2-2; p-value chi-square is 0.00). Cultural sites are more often re-nominated than natural sites. Fifty-nine percent of the rejected cultural sites have been re-nominated (hundred and one sites), as opposed to forty-one percent of the rejected natural sites (sixty-five sites). Cultural sites have more chances to be listed, which may be due to less strict criteria, imprecise nomination documents in the first phase or more pressure from stakeholders. A similarity in the nomination trajectory of the natural and cultural sites is that eighty-one percent of the listed sites is inscribed in the first attempt, about fifteen percent in the second, three percent in the third and one percent in the fourth or fifth. Africa is the only continent where sites have been listed in the fourth attempt. There are differences between continents (p-value chi-

square is 0.06). Where nomination attempts are concerned, Oceania has the highest share of listed sites (ninety-five percent), Africa the lowest (seventy-two percent).

Figure 2-2: Share of listed world heritage sites per attempt, per kind and continent.



Source: UNESCO (1978-2003), adapted data.

The nomination process lasts at least eighteen months (Leask and Fyall 2000). Stakeholders interested in a world heritage nomination of 'their' site need time before the site is accepted on the country's tentative list and until it is officially nominated. The nomination process of the Dorset and East Devon Coast (United Kingdom) lasted about eight years. Six years elapsed before it was included on United Kingdom's tentative list. Another two years passed by before the site was inscribed on the world heritage list in 2001. Lengthy nomination procedures necessitate persistency.

Some European sites that have been rejected are the Lake District National Park, Cambridge colleges (both in the United Kingdom), the Wadden Sea (Germany), and the old city of Mostar (Bosnia-Herzegovina). About twenty-five percent of the *rejected* sites did not meet the criterion of outstanding universal value according to the World Heritage Committee. The Sydney Opera House (Australia), the city of Gdańsk (Poland), Tripoli (Libya), and Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina) have been rejected for this same reason. The other seventy-five percent were rejected on other grounds than quality. More than forty percent of the rejected sites were not listed due to procedural reasons – ranging from an incomplete nomination document to late submission of the nomination, from the inability to do a comparative study by an advisory body to an incorrect boundary of the site. Another twenty-five percent was not sufficiently protected and ten percent was rejected for undisclosed reasons.

About half the number of sites rejected for procedural or protection reasons have been listed in a later year. However, a site like Babylon (Iraq) – rejected on procedural and

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protection grounds – has not been re-nominated despite claims that the site is of outstanding universal value (Prott 1992: 4). ‘Only’ about seventy out of about thousand *nominated* sites are declared not to be of outstanding universal value. Either countries are highly competent in determining the quality of their proposed sites or the international selection committees do not apply the selection criteria very strictly.

#### ***2.2 Selection of world heritage sites largely nationally determined***

A ‘truly’ world heritage convention, supposedly, establishes a supranational structure to govern a system of selecting and managing sites. The World Heritage Committee is such a body. Most decisions, however, are taken at the national level. Almost all world heritage sites have been nominated by the country wherein the site is located. An NGO, such as IUCN, is unable to nominate certain sites even though it has pointed out that some large forests are missing from the world heritage list (Sayer *et al.* 2000: 307; Holdgate, 1992: 10). Also blind spots identified by individual scientists such as Plachter (1995: 349-350) fall on deaf ears. Only some world heritage nominations have been initiated by the World Heritage Committee, such as Angkor Wat (Cambodia), Bamiyan Valley (Afghanistan) and Ashur (Qal’at sherqat) (Iraq).

Nomination of potential world heritage sites which is initiated by the country itself has to pass three critical stages. Countries must be willing to participate in the convention, be willing to nominate sites, and be able to nominate sites.

##### ***2.2.1 Countries must be willing to participate***

The ability to nominate a site is restricted to countries that have signed the convention. The United States of America was the first country that ratified the convention, but it was primarily the African countries that adhered to the convention initially. Nine of the first twenty participating countries were African. France, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Italy participated when the first sites were designated in 1978, while the United Kingdom, Spain and the Soviet Union stood on the sidelines. European countries were generally late in ratifying the convention (Lazzarotti 2000: 13), but there were also some other ‘omissions’ until the mid-1980s, such as Mexico and China. The absence of large countries made it disputable whether one could speak of a real world heritage list and “for a number of years, the committee looked forward somewhat anxiously to the participation of some countries whose continued absence would have left little meaning to the idea of a world heritage” (Batisse 1992: 16; see also Pressouyre 1993: 34). The desire to include all countries continues until today (2004), with countries in the Pacific region being approached to ratify the convention. It can be argued, however, that it is unnecessary for a country to ratify the convention when it does not have a site of outstanding universal value. The necessity of including certain countries would only become important when “prime candidates from non-signatory nations as Machu Picchu, Stonehenge, and the Great Wall of China... grace the list” (Douglas 1982: 8) or when one wants all countries to (financially) contribute to the preservation of identified world heritage sites.

Three reasons why countries did or still do not participate in the world heritage convention can be identified. First, some countries state that the convention is too much a Western concept. Second, the convention is not a priority in some countries. And third, the countries outside the international arena cannot participate.

*1) The world heritage convention is a Western concept*

Participation in the world heritage convention implies that countries agree with an international concept that is defined from a Western point of view. However, not every country wants to conform to a set of Western regulations. Countries vary “in their willingness to ‘open’ sites to the management and monitoring which follow official inscription... Saudi Arabia, with Mecca and Medina within its borders, technically has accepted, not ratified the convention; low response is characteristic of several Islamic countries, reticent on nominating functioning religious buildings” (Pocock 1997a: 267). Some essential sites for an all-encompassing world heritage list – such as Mecca, the ‘heart’ of Islam – are still not nominated (see also Bennett 1977: 29). Likewise, Iraq, has not nominated its superb archaeological sites of Nimrut and Ur (Prott 1992: 4).

*2) The world heritage convention is not a priority*

The world heritage convention is not always a priority, as countries do not expect much benefit from a world heritage listing. The Netherlands had the intention to sign the convention in 1981, but that was not done until several years later “due to other priorities” (Van Heijnsbergen 1987: 11-12). The low priority was partly grounded in the notion that the Dutch national heritage was already sufficiently preserved (Chouchena and Van Rossum 1999: 5). The impetus to ratify the convention finally came from the desire of Willemstad, the capital of the Dutch Antilles in the Caribbean, which required national nomination in its application for world heritage status.

The low priority in the Netherlands in signing the world heritage convention also stemmed from UNESCO’s reputation in the mid-1980s that led to the withdrawal of the United States of America and the United Kingdom from UNESCO. The first-mentioned country left UNESCO in 1984 as “it was growing both corrupt and politicised” (Jennings 2003: 45) whilst the latter left UNESCO due to the “politicisation of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, a ‘statist’ approach to the solving of problems and higher levels of budgetary growth” (Hocking 1985: 75). The Dutch ratification of the convention became possible after the “recovery of UNESCO as an organisation for international intellectual co-operation” (OCW 1996: 43), whereby also the “idealistic component... [of] the common concern for... cultural heritage... handed on to us” (WVC 1993: 181) became a point of consideration.

The decision of the United States of America and the United Kingdom to leave UNESCO did not lead to a suspension of these countries’ activities in the world heritage convention (Van Heijnsbergen 1987: 11). Both countries remained members of the world heritage convention. Notably, the United Kingdom continued its participation in only five UNESCO activities (Dutt 1999: 218-219). The United States of America and the United Kingdom re-joined UNESCO in 2003 and 1997 respectively (UNESCO 2004b).

*3) Outside the international arena*

Countries that placed themselves outside the international arena sometimes do not participate in the world heritage convention. Lazzarotti (2000: 13) reports that Cambodia and South Africa could not participate due to respectively the presence of the Red Khmer in the former and the imposition of apartheid in the latter. Ultimately, these countries signed the convention in 1991 and 1997.

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### *2.2.2 Countries must be willing to nominate sites*

The right to nominate a site for the world heritage list is exclusively in the hands of the one national state organisation that is appointed as UNESCO's official contact partner. No individual or NGO can directly submit its 'own' favourite heritage site to UNESCO. This leads to three problems. Countries can overlook important sites, can exclude the heritage of minorities and may not nominate sites that hold extractable resources.

#### *1) Overlooking important sites*

Potential world heritage sites can be overlooked without intent. Pressouyre (1993: 33) wondered why Chile, which ratified the convention in 1980, has never nominated Easter Island. The island was eventually listed in 1995. Singh (1997) has pointed out that the holy Hindu city of Varanasi – or Benares – meets the world heritage criteria, but the city is not nominated “mainly due to... lack of interest by the Indian Government” (pp. 109-110). And Potter (2003: 7) wonders why the natural landscapes of Iceland with its geysers and glaciers have not been put forward yet.

#### *2) Excluding a minority's heritage*

The possibility that minorities may not be given the opportunity to nominate sites prevents the convention from functioning flawlessly (Aplin 2002: 352; Nuryanti 1996a: 7). It can be the case that only the heritage of the dominant group is nominated, especially when the heritage of others undermines the preferred image of a lengthy and united history (Fontein 2000: 57). Turkey has not nominated any Armenian or Georgian heritage site (Pressouyre 1993: 36), while many African countries have been hesitant in proposing sites that date from the colonial era (Turtinen 2000: 20).

Another 'notorious' country in this instance is China. In 2001, two of the twenty-four world heritage sites represented minority cultures while most other sites highlight the glories of Han culture (Gilley 2001: 60-62). The European and colonial heritage in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Macao is generally ignored (Agnew and Demas 2001: 16). And if the Chinese government nominated a minority site, it was mainly in its own interests. The mountain resort at Chengde suggests, according to the nomination document, nationwide historical unity. The site is a “typical example of the perfect harmony of ancient China's Imperial gardens and temples” and provides “historic evidence of the final formation of a unitary, multicultural China” (Hevia 2001: 223). The original purpose for building the site, “to awe the people of Inner and Central Asia into submission” (Hevia 2001: 234), is not even alluded to the world heritage listing.

#### *3) No nomination of sites with exploitable resources*

The desire to exploit areas for economic purposes in the future may forestall any world heritage nomination of these areas, as the exploitation may be hindered after worldwide recognition (Eagles and McCool 2002: 54). This especially affects natural areas that can be used for the timber industry or for mining (Plachter 1995: 349). However, not every important site has been kept from the list due to the presence of natural resources. In Kakadu National Park, Australia, only about one square kilometre is zoned for mining, making up 0.04% of the conservation area (Davis and Weiler 1992: 318). And the government of New Zealand stopped the logging in Te Wahipounamu to enable a world heritage nomination in the late 1980s (Watson 1992: 14).

### *2.2.3 Countries must be able to nominate sites*

The nomination process of at least eighteen months demands much energy and resources from the country proposing a site. There are countries that “deserve the recognition and assistance that listing would bring, but [they] often lack the means to inventory, nominate, and protect their sites” (Charleton 2000). Nomination is more difficult in the following three instances: countries have no national heritage tradition, social unrest prevents a nomination, and stateless areas cannot be nominated.

#### *1) No national heritage tradition*

The absence of national parks or designated monuments is often a consequence of a shortage of trained personnel, political instability, lack of recognition or a low priority. In 1982, Blower (1982: 722) noted that many, especially Third World countries, have no national system of national parks or at best something that only exists in theory, not in practice. Cartwright (1991: 358-359) summarises the cultural, economical and demographic reasons why heritage, or conservation in general, is difficult in Africa. A population that has doubled exacts its toll on the natural resources. Furthermore, the urban elite regards forest and wildlife as a form of backwardness, and there is no sacred principle that fosters respect for and the preservation of the wildlife.

The absence of a heritage tradition can preclude a world heritage listing. The Vietnamese had problems to propose the inner city of Hanoi, as it was unable “to prepare... an indicative list” (Logan 1995: 334). This has prevented a nomination of the old sector of Hanoi. However, Australia and France have done some restoration work in Hanoi within the context of bilateral cooperation.

#### *2) Social unrest*

Social unrest, such as civil wars, forms a major obstacle to nomination for the world heritage list. Sudan ratified the world heritage convention in 1974 and underwent a civil war from 1983 onwards. The pyramids at Meroe (Kush), Sudan, which “would surely qualify” (Jones 1994: 316), could only be nominated for the world heritage list when the civil war waned temporarily in 2002.

A counter-example is the case of Lebanon. This country was able to get four of the seven nominated sites listed in 1984, even though the armed conflict between the Lebanese Muslims and Maronite-dominated Phalangist militias lasted from 1975 until 1992 (Van Voorden and Van Oers 1998: 104). A world heritage status may be especially useful during civil wars, as it can function as an extra added shield of protection against destruction.

#### *3) Stateless areas*

The concept of ‘a common heritage of humanity’ is based on a similar idea in the field of ‘space studies’ (Joyner 1986: 190). However, the most obvious shared entities that might qualify for listing – like Antarctica, the ocean floor, outer space, or the moon – cannot be nominated, as no country officially owns these areas. This is “an illustration of the political weakness of the convention” (Wilson 1992: 259; see also Thorsell 2001: 34). Others, such as Rogers (2004: 5-6), have been unsuccessful proponents of the nomination of Tranquillity Base on the moon for the world heritage list. Rogers persuasively argued his case by quoting the text that is still readable on the spacecraft *Eagle* that was left behind on the moon: ‘We came in peace for all mankind’ (p. 6).



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### *2.2.4 High-quality sites may not be nominated*

Countries' inability to nominate sites does not say anything about the quality of the sites. Sites may be excluded from listing on other grounds than their quality and are denied the opportunity of being preserved within a worldwide framework. Tonglushan (China) would have qualified for listing in the 1980s, but "is today so reduced by continued mining operations that it no longer fulfils criteria which would have caused it to be selected some ten years ago" (Pressouyre 1993: 28). Also natural areas with a high, but threatened biodiversity, so-called *hotspots*, are almost entirely absent on the world heritage list (Kunich 2003: 647; Plachter 1995: 349). Rogo and Oguge (2000: 522) make the case for the necessity to better preserve the forests of Taita Hills (Kenya) – a hotspot that is neither on the world heritage list nor on Kenya's tentative list. International assistance is welcome, as the national Forestry Department cannot manage the site due to a lack of funds, corruption and resource exploitation in the area (see also Sayer *et al.* 2000: 307-308; Kunich 2003: 644).

### *2.3 Dynamics of the world heritage list*

Unique obstacles peculiar to some countries may have led to a world heritage list that is not representative of the earth's heritage. Certain categories of heritage may be over- or underrepresented on the world heritage list. This section looks at two of these biases: the kind and spatial distribution of world heritage sites.

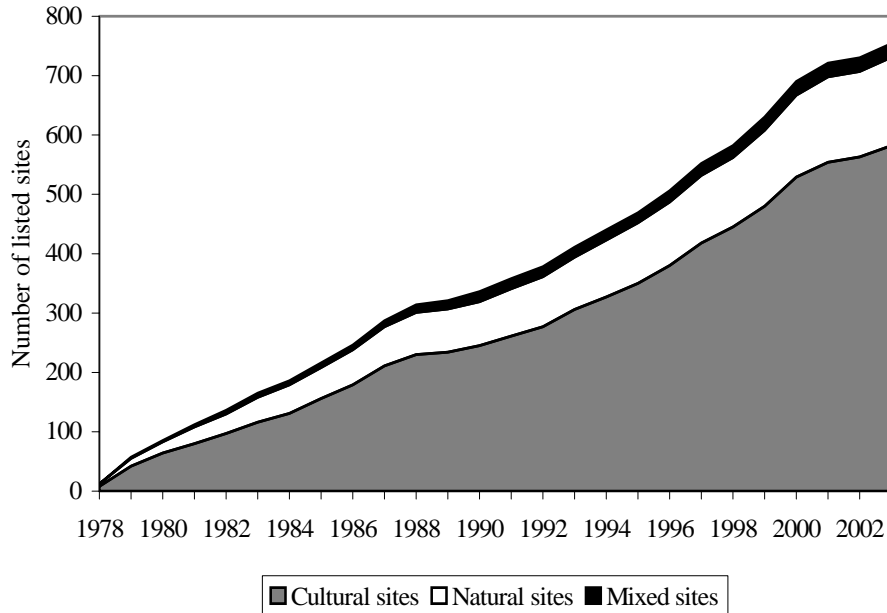
#### *2.3.1 Kind of world heritage sites*

A balance in the number of natural and cultural world heritage sites may be of minor importance when drawing up a list of the world's 'best' heritage sites. However, the World Heritage Committee has stressed the importance of such a balance from the outset (see also Train 1973: 4). It has been reported that "a balanced natural-cultural presentation is necessary to help the committee effectively carry out its work" (Ambio 1983: 140), although this necessity is not further elaborated.

The 'operational guidelines' have always included a paragraph on the "Balance between the cultural and the natural heritage in the implementation of the convention" (UNESCO 2004a). The organisational structure of the convention, such as the partition of responsibilities at the international level between IUCN and ICOMOS as well as between the science and the culture sector at the UNESCO secretariat in Paris may have contributed to the desire for a nature-culture balance (see also box 2-1). IUCN sees "the preponderance of culture over nature... reflected in all aspects of the work of the convention" (Thorsell 2001: 34), even though "more than culture, nature attracts concerted protection" (Lowenthal 1998a: 174).

At present the ratio of cultural and natural sites in the world heritage list is 4:1 (figure 2-3). The share of natural sites has steadily decreased from about twenty-five percent in the early 1980s to twenty percent in 2004. The share of natural sites varies significantly between continents. The share of natural sites is highest in 'new' continents, where human intervention started relatively late. Fifty-eight and seventy-four percent of the sites in North America and Oceania are natural in character. The concept of wilderness also underpins American, Canadian and Australian inheritance (Thompson 2000: 256; Aplin 2002: 26). In the other 'new' continent of Latin America, however, 'only' twenty-eight percent of the sites are natural.

Figure 2-3: The number of listed world heritage sites in three categories, 1978-2003.



Source: UNESCO (2004a), adapted data.

The possible, future exploitation of natural areas is one reason for the low number of natural world heritage sites. Two additional reasons can be given. The criterion of integrity is more strictly applied than the criterion of authenticity, and the number of natural regions is much smaller than the number of cultural regions because of a different classification system.

#### 1) Strict application of the criterion of integrity

The criterion of integrity has long been regarded as a reliable and irrefutable explanatory factor for the nature-culture disparity. This criterion requires that natural zones with “the greatest number of geological, climatic, and biological characteristics would be preserved from all human endeavour destructive of ecological balance” (Pressouyre 1993: 14). This prerequisite favours the selection of untouched natural sites in large countries with a developed national parks system (Pocock 1997b: 381).

Relatively densely populated countries without a strict national park policy, such as most European countries, have few natural world heritage sites. The national park idea has permeated the European continent, but European park policies have been less rigorously than their American and Australian counterparts. European parks, for example, frequently include whole villages (Aplin 2002: 26). The English world heritage selection committee was restricted to the least affected natural areas, such as estuaries, cliff areas and some geological sites (DCMS 1999: 10). And Germany has almost completely refrained from nominating natural sites (Plachter 1995: 354). At the same time, both England and Germany have nominated several cultural sites.

Natural areas are often spread out over the territory of more than one country. A multilateral world heritage nomination is more complicated than a nomination by one

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country. The nomination process of the Wadden Sea by Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands slowed down after the World Heritage Committee decided to reject the nomination of a German part in 1989 (Van der Aa *et al.* 2004: 299). Also the Dead Sea basin might not have been nominated for a similar reason. The NGO Friends of the Earth actively supports this nomination, but this requires an agreement between Jordan, Israel and Palestine, while Palestine has not even ratified the convention yet.

Research by Sayer *et al.* (2000) has indicated that also “many... [natural world heritage sites] have significant human populations. Of the... sites located in non-OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] countries seventy of the seventy-five have extractive activities occurring within the borders of the protected area with poaching, agriculture, grazing, logging and mining being widespread” (p. 307). Either the criterion of integrity has not been applied consistently or resource extraction in these sites has been going on despite their world heritage listing.

Nominated cultural sites have to pass the test of authenticity – which stipulates criteria such as originality in design, material, workmanship or setting (UNESCO 2004a) – instead of the test of integrity. The listing of the old town of Warszawa (*Warsaw*), which was largely destroyed during the Second World War, shows that the application of the criterion of authenticity is flexible. Ultimately, Warszawa was listed as “an outstanding example of a near-total reconstruction” (UNESCO 2004a). Likewise, the Buddhist statues of Bamiyan are listed, among others, as it is “testimony to the tragic destruction by the Taliban... which shook the world in March 2001” (UNESCO 2004a).

### *2) Different classification systems*

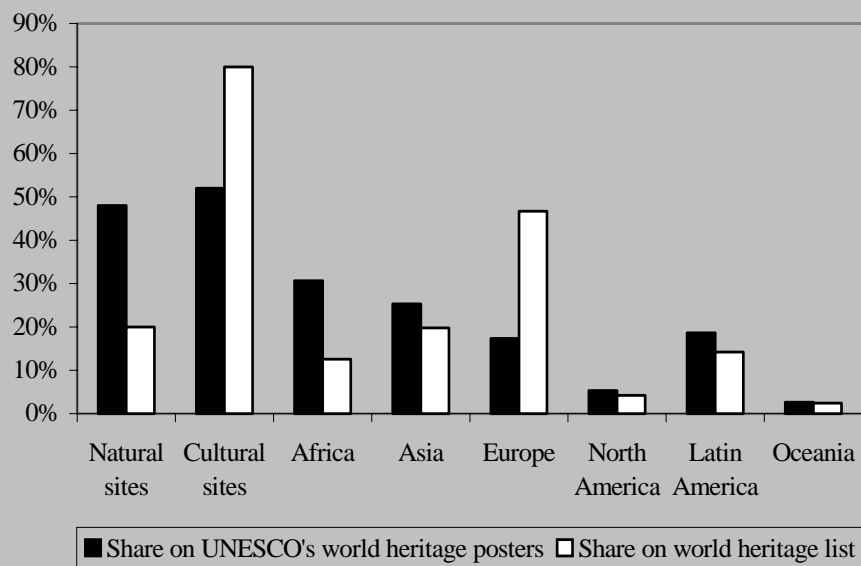
The criterion of outstanding universal value requires that listed sites have to be the best representative within their ‘region’. To this end, IUCN (1982) has divided the world into eight natural realms. Natural sites have to be of outstanding universal value in their entire realm, often covering whole continents. ICOMOS has not defined comparable cultural regions. The world would be divided in many more cultural regions than eight, if such a subdivision would ever be realised: “the nuances and varieties of cultural sites are of huge importance to national or local history and pride and to human sensitivity and emotion” (Batisse 1992: 17). The entire *natural* Mediterranean region falls into the Palearctic realm, whereas the *cultural* Mediterranean region can be divided into at least an Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Islamic part. IUCN is better able to judge a site’s outstanding universal value than ICOMOS: “it is surely easier to perceive a consensus on... sites in the natural world... than in the cultural world” (Pocock 1997a: 266-267). Thirty-nine percent of the ninety-six rejected natural sites did not meet the criterion of outstanding universal value, while twenty-seven percent of the 232 rejected cultural sites is not listed for the same reason.

A counter argument would be that not only the number of natural and cultural sites should be counted. Natural world heritage sites have a much larger surface area than cultural sites. One natural site can represent a number of unique phenomena, while cultural sites are normally listed under separate headings. The distinction between the two categories is also open to debate, as natural sites are also a kind of cultural site. Both kinds of sites have only meaning for humanity when meanings are ascribed to them (Pettman 2002: 6). In this sense, the distinction between natural and cultural sites is somewhat artificial (Creaser 1994: 75; Pressouyre 1993: 11).

Box 2-1: Representations of world heritage sites on UNESCO's world heritage poster.

UNESCO prefers the number of listed natural and cultural world heritage sites to be in balance, the spatial distribution of sites over the world to be even and an equal number of earlier and later listed sites. This strive for balance between kinds of listed sites, spatial distribution, and earlier and later listed sites is not only apparent in its published policy documents, but also from the annual world heritage poster distributed by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre between 1997 and 2003.

Figure 2-4: Share of world heritage sites on world heritage posters and list.



Sources: UNESCO (1997-2003) and UNESCO (2004a) adapted data.

The natural or cultural character, the geographical location and the year of listing of the world heritage sites on the posters have been analysed. It can be seen that the number of pictured natural and cultural sites is roughly equal, whereas there are four cultural sites for every natural one on the list (figure 2-4). Almost one in three photos is an African world heritage site, making it the most illustrated continent. Meanwhile Europe is the only continent that has a lower share on the poster than on the world heritage list (seventeen versus forty-seven percent). And UNESCO portrays world heritage sites independent of the year in which the sites have been listed, effectively dispelling the suggestion that earlier listed sites are of higher quality than more recently inscribed world heritage sites. In total, the world heritage poster shows thirty-five 'earlier' and thirty-two 'later' listed sites (world heritage sites were classified as earlier listed if they were listed before the midpoint of the period between 1978 and the year of publishing the poster).

The posters have been designed in such a way that it conveys the impression that world heritage sites are less spatially concentrated. Europe, the smallest continent, is portrayed on a much larger scale than Africa and the Americas. This creates the perception of an even distribution of world heritage sites on each continent.

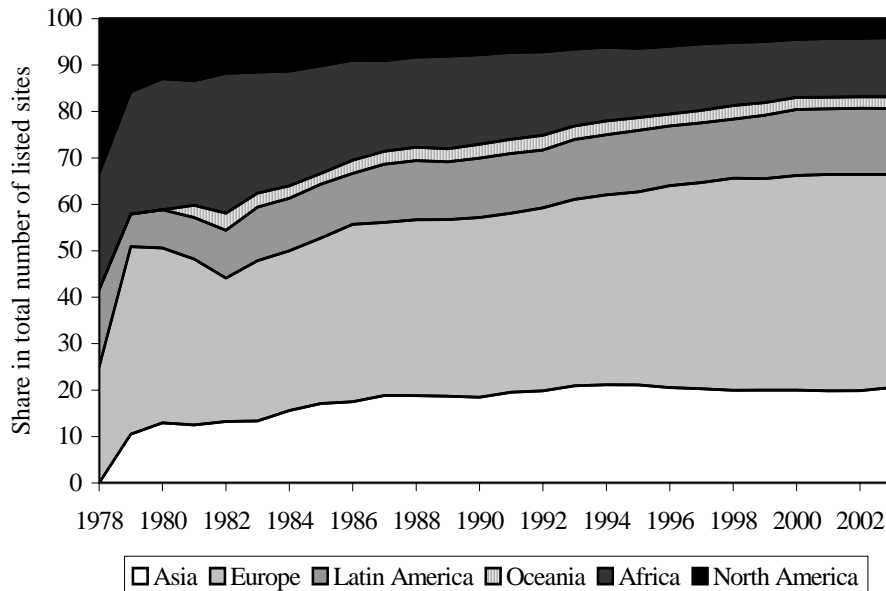
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### *2.3.2 Spatial distribution of world heritage*

UNESCO has, in the same vein with regard to the low number of natural world heritage sites, expressed its concern over the list's under-representation of non-Western heritage sites. UNESCO prefers a geographical balance, as the inception of the list is "an attempt to create a world inventory which will be as comprehensive, representative and coherent as possible" (*UNESCO Courier* 1992: 12) and a reflection of cultural diversity (UNESCO 2004a). UNESCO's 'judgement call' is often reiterated: "the roll-call of sites is currently neither an accurate reflection of the world's balance and range of cultures or of actual prime heritage as judged by global value" (Boniface 2001: 77; see also Droste 1995a: 20; Pearson and Sullivan 1995: 42). In more general terms, Graham *et al.* (2000) point out that "it has been argued that modernity – and consequently its heritage – is largely defined in masculine, middle-class, urban and Eurocentric terms" (p. 44).

A list of heritage sites that forms the 'heritage of humanity', according to UNESCO, is only truly universal when all countries and cultures are included, as "everyone is entitled to it" (Lowenthal 1998a: 173). Inclusiveness should guarantee the list's credibility, which has been a major focus of UNESCO politics articulated under headings like 'global study' and 'global strategy' from the late 1980s onwards (Rivet and Cleere 2001: 234). The 'global strategy' is spelt out in a series of policy documents to achieve spatial and typological balances. The viewpoint that participation of all countries or cultures is necessary for a genuine world heritage list is countered by the argument that the list should only register sites that meet the criterion of outstanding universal value. Heritage may be a "ubiquitous resource" (Ashworth 2000: 23), but the 'best' heritage sites are likely to be concentrated in certain areas of the world.

*Figure 2-5: Year-end proportion of listed sites on each continent.*



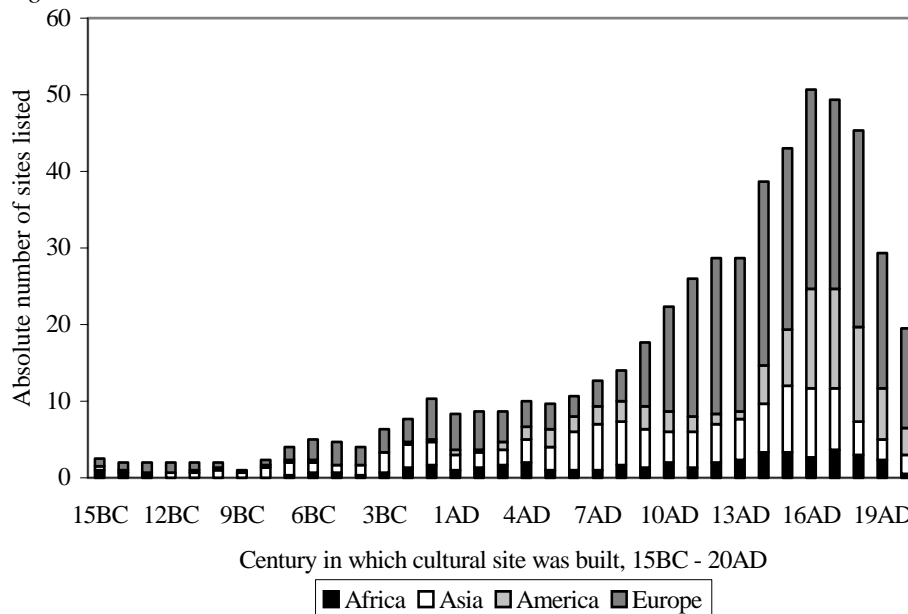
Source: UNESCO (2004a), adapted data.

Figure 2-5 shows the shifts in the spatial distribution of sites over six continents between 1978 and 2003. The share of sites in Europe has gradually increased to forty-six percent, while the number of sites in Africa has decreased from thirty percent in 1982 to thirteen percent in 2003. The ‘global strategy’ tried to arrest the opposing trends. At the same time, the interest in the convention has weakened in North America in contrast to the heightened interest in Asia and Latin America. Do the convention’s mechanisms exclude more sites with outstanding universal value in certain continents than in others?

#### 2.4 Why has Europe so many world heritage sites?

Europe’s over-representation on the world heritage list is often attributed to the convention being written from a white, middle-class, male’s perspective (compare McCullagh 2000: 41) which favours Western ideas of heritage. The world heritage convention, an American idea that was shaped in the 1960s and 1970s, is referred to as “an international extension of the concept of national parks” (Train 1973: 2) or “the international equivalent of the [American] national historic landmarks program” (Charleton 1984: 22). Originally, experts from the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), ICOMOS and IUCN were responsible for the wording of the convention text in the 1970s (Pressouyre 1993: 9). These organisations, more symbolically, are located in Europe: Rome, Paris and Gland in Switzerland (Turtinen 2000: 7). The World Heritage Centre is located in Paris, and the Parthenon, the symbol of UNESCO (Yale 1991: 228), is in Athens.

Figure 2-6: Dates when listed cultural world heritage sites were built, three-century average.



Source: UNESCO (2004a), adapted data.

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The final convention text primarily corresponds with Western perceptions of heritage. Cultural heritage was understood as the built relics of the past, incorporating castles, cathedrals and entire settlements: “For the World Heritage Committee, culture manifests itself principally in the form of archaeological sites and monuments from classical Greece and Rome, European architecture from the later Middle Ages to neo-classicism, and the art and architecture in the Indian sub-continent and imperial China” (Cleere 1998: 28; see also Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 275-276). The convention text and the ‘operational guidelines’ have been regarded as the bedrock of the supposed imbalance (Fontein 2000: 40; Turtinen 2000: 16). This particular notion of heritage excluded, among others, “living cultures, especially those of traditional ‘societies’” (Von Droste 1995a: 21), and contributed to the under-representation of African cultural heritage. In 1994, the World Heritage Committee adopted the recommendation to adapt the cultural criteria to enable nominations from living cultures.

The majority of cultural sites stem from the period between the tenth and the eighteenth century (figure 2-6). Especially Europe and America (with the majority of sites from Latin America) have most sites from between the fourteenth and eighteenth century. World heritage sites in Asia and Africa, in contrast, show a more even representation from different eras. The emphasis on the colonial era in Latin America stands out, as there are several old civilisations like Inca, Maya, and Aztecs. Van Hooff (1995: 355) poses the following question: “Identifizieren sich Regierung und Eliten jener [Latin Amerikanischer] Länder kulturell und ideologisch mehr mit der kolonialzeit... Oder begünstigt das Auswahlverfahren, die Anwendung sowie Bewertung der Kriterien des Welterbekomitees jene historische Phase?... Die Situation in Lateinamerika illustriert ein weltweites geographisches, typologisches und historisch-zeitliches Ungleichgewicht und einen fehlenden repräsentativen Querschnitt”. However, is Latin America’s stress on colonial heritage really a problem or are colonial sites indeed the most available valuable heritage sites on this continent at present?

#### *2.4.1 Factors influencing the number of world heritage sites*

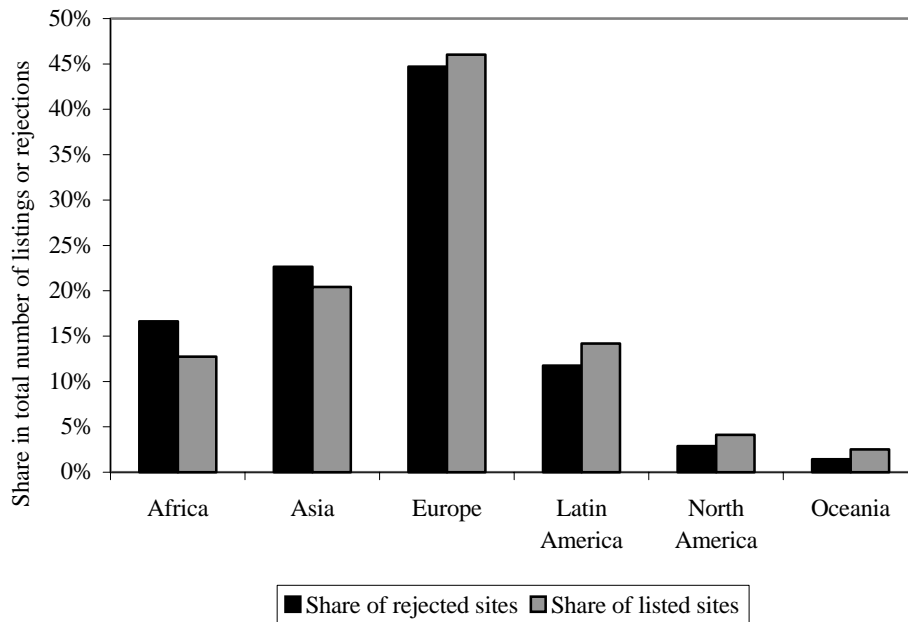
Europe’s overrepresentation might be largely explained by the convention’s preference for sites regarded as important by Europeans, highlighting European cultural and economic hegemony then – that is between the sixteenth and the twentieth century. Western countries are also better able to nominate more sites. Thanks to their greater prosperity, they can select heritage sites from a rather recent period where materials which were used have a relatively long lifespan. These arguments are, however, less robust under closer scrutiny. First, heritage in Western countries is not automatically valued more highly by international NGOs. Second, more countries should be able to nominate sites when they get richer. And third, listed sites become increasingly younger, facilitating more nominations from countries.

##### *1) Even geographical distribution of rejections*

Reports from the World Heritage Committee meetings do not support the theory that Western sites are less often rejected than non-Western sites. The share of rejected sites is almost equal to the share of sites that is listed on every continent (figure 2-7). Europe makes up forty-six percent of the world heritage list, but also forty-five percent of the

rejected sites are European (156 of the 349 rejected sites). Europe is even the continent (after Oceania, with only five rejections) with proportionally the most number of sites rejected due to insufficient quality, whereas Africa scores the lowest.

*Figure 2-7: Share of rejected and listed sites per continent, 1978-2003.*



*Sources: UNESCO (1978-2003) and UNESCO (2004a), adapted data.*

### *2) More countries are able to nominate sites*

It is asserted that citizens of wealthy countries have greater interest in heritage, as the care for the built and natural environment becomes more feasible after primary needs are met (Franssen 1997: 26; Lynch 1972: 29; Mabulla 2000: 212). This could explain why more European heritage sites are on the world heritage list, as world heritage sites are predominantly located in richer countries. The world's twenty-one richest countries have on average thirteen world heritage sites. The other 146 countries that ratified the convention have on average a little more than three world heritage sites. However, increasingly more countries should be able to nominate sites as they become richer.

### *3) World heritage sites are increasingly younger*

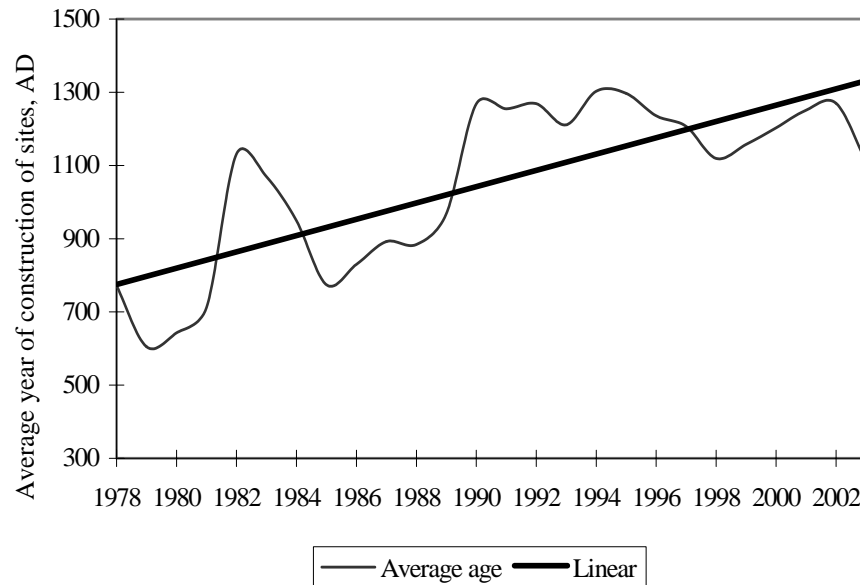
More and more countries should be able to nominate sites, as the average date of construction of a site gradually becomes more recent. In 1978, the average year of the construction of cultural sites was about 800 AD. Nowadays, sites date on average from about 1200 AD (figure 2-8). The shift towards less old monuments can be explained by the appearance of international heritage organisations that promote new kinds of heritage. The International Working Party for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement (DOCOMOMO) promotes the architecture of the twentieth century and The International Committee for



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the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH) focuses on industrial heritage. Countries deliberately jump on this bandwagon to maintain their active participation in the convention. Furthermore, Kuipers (1998: 55) mentions that many countries have followed a historical chronology when selecting potential world heritage sites.

*Figure 2-8: Average year of construction of listed world heritage sites according to year of listing, three-year average.*



Source: UNESCO (2004a), adapted data.

#### *2.4.2 Cultural productions per region*

UNESCO's statement concerning Europe's overrepresentation of world heritage sites suggests that the organisation has an idea of the number of sites that each region is entitled to. These claims, however, have only been backed by calculations of Europe's share *in proportion to* the share of other continents. Cleere (1998) poses a more relevant question: "Is the rest of the world underrepresented on the list or is Europe overrepresented?" (p. 27).

The number of sites that a country 'deserves' may not be dependent upon the number of sites in other countries. In contrast, a country may be entitled to a number of sites based on the quality of its heritage. Certain academics have argued that Europe is the continent with the richest history, paving the road to legitimate Europe's share on the world heritage list. Two proponents are David Landes (1998) and Jared Diamond (1997) whose arguments are found in *The wealth and poverty of nations: Why some are so rich and some so poor* and *Guns, germs and steel: The fates of human societies*, respectively. Both authors argue that Europe is more dominant than other civilisations, largely thanks to favourable environments (Blaut 1999: 391). Davies (1997: 46-47) stresses Europe's outstanding natural environment and contends that: "it is impossible to deny that Europe has been endowed with a formidable repertoire of physical

features. Europe's landforms, climate, geology, and fauna have combined to produce a benign environment that is essential to an understanding of its development... there is no comparison between the relative ease of travel in Europe and that in the greater continents".

Some authors have stated that Europe possesses most of the earth's heritage. Not backed by any calculations, Borley (1994: 7) asserts that "half the monuments of the world are to be found in Europe" and Van der Borg and Costa (1996: 215) call attention to a study: "according to a much cited, but never officially published, study by UNESCO, more than fifty percent of the global cultural and historical heritage is concentrated in Italy". These arguments may be just as invalid as UNESCO's contention, as they are merely opinions. There is a danger of judging representations on the basis of beliefs: "The scientific relevance of representativity in relation to heritage can always be contested... If it is not based on scientific premises, the representativity of world heritage would risk being reduced to questionable political arithmetic" (Musitelli 2003: 330). The 'fairness' of a spatial heritage distribution can be estimated, as "the locations of the sites are the chance products of history and geography" (Batisse 1992: 28). The major problem is how to measure the quality of a region's heritage sites.

#### *2.4.3 History as indicator for cultural production*

A region's importance in history is a possible way to measure the number of heritage sites a region 'deserves'. Both heritage and history make continually changing *selections* of the *past*. Historians select the history that they think is relevant, heritage "is what contemporary society chooses to inherit" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 6). The selection of history and heritage are contemporary phenomena: "History... is not a fixed entity but an activity. History is the story we are constantly telling ourselves... We history" (Brett 1993: 186). History is not a selection of what was important in the *past*, but what one *today* thinks is important about the past (Friedman 1994: 118).

The convergence between heritage and history possibly makes history a useful indicator for the number of heritage sites that each region 'should have'. The usage of history as a parameter for heritage raises, however, the challenge of identifying a source to measure the role of various continents in world history. A common source for analysing representations is written material in any form, varying from leaflets to books. In this case, handbooks seem to be most useful. In theory, such handbooks should encompass the history of all countries, should run from the origin of the human race until the present day, and should be as objective as possible, preferably put together by people from different parts of the world. Evidently, such an ideal source is hard to find.

A preliminary analysis of the prominence of various continents in history is presented in box 2-2. World history is narrated in two books, *The Times history of the world* and *Timelines of world history*. The usefulness of these two handbooks for assessing various continents' cultural productivity is highly contested and the number of consulted books should be much higher to lend more validity. Despite these disadvantages, the books seem to indicate that it is too naïve to simply conclude that Europe is over-represented on the world heritage list because it has the most number of sites. UNESCO's aim of achieving spatial balances as formulated in their 'global strategy' may be incorrect, or even 'unfair'.

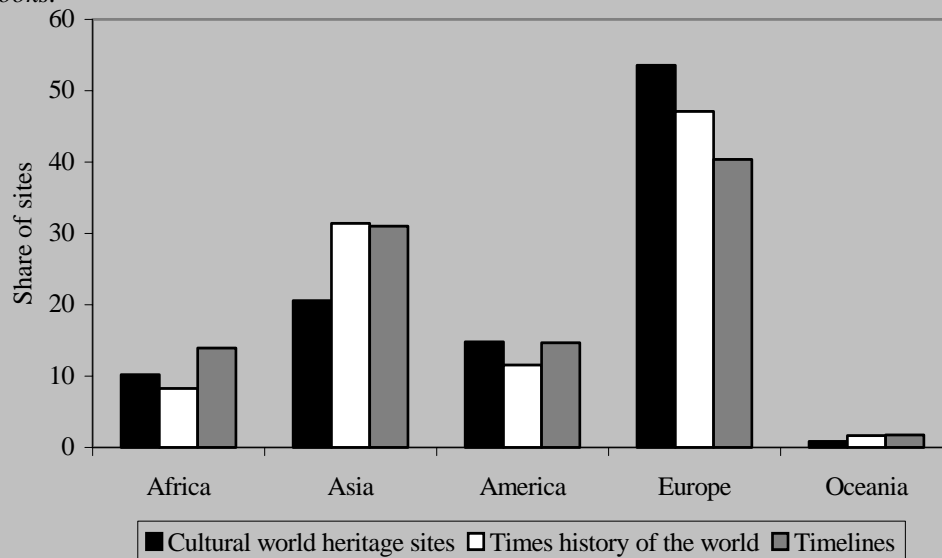
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### Box 2-2: History books as indicator for the number of world heritage sites.

Possible books to analyse the role of various continents in world history are *The Times history of the world* and *Timelines of world history*. Both books cover the whole world and all time eras, whereby the first-mentioned book explicitly attempts “to avoid too Eurocentric a treatment” (Overy 1999: 13) and *Timelines*’s objective is “to provide a reference work which looks at the world as an outsider... there is no country or civilisation at its centre” (Teeple 2002: 3). The disadvantages of these sources also abound. The editor of *The Times history*, as well as twenty-four of the twenty-five contributors were then academics at universities in the United Kingdom, while *Timelines* was written by someone from the United States of America. These books do not necessarily deal with cultural productions, but “provide an authoritative history of the world” (Overy 1999: 13) or present “the chronological... factual data, who, what, where, when, and why” (Teeple 2002: 3).

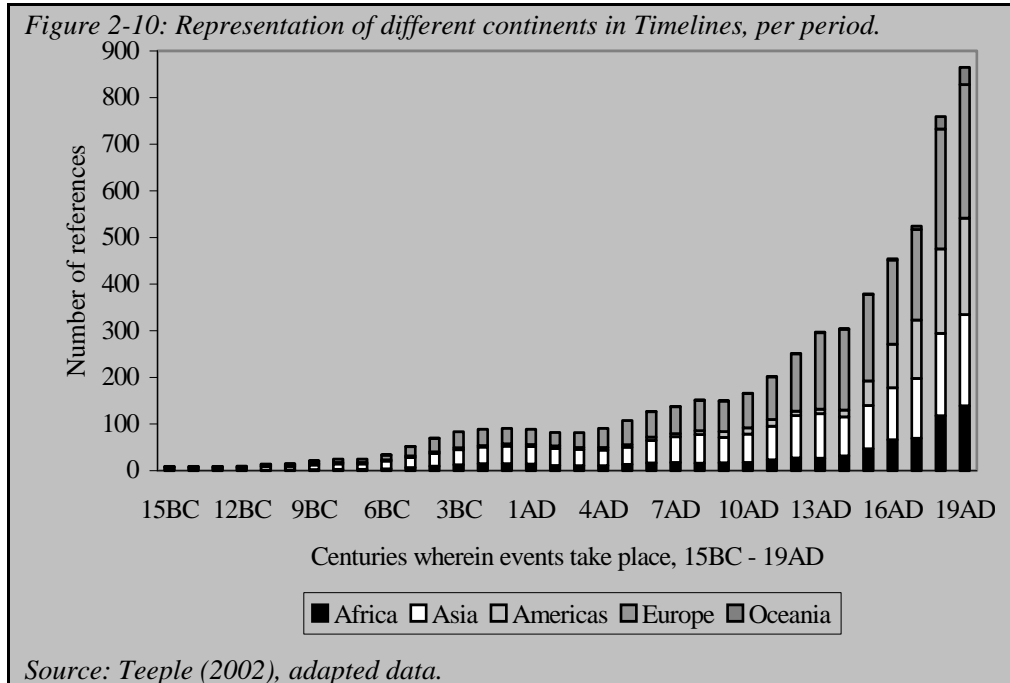
The attention of these two sources to the various continents has been analysed as follows. In *The Times history*, the 365 themes, ranging from man’s origin until 1870, have been ascribed to the dominant continent. In *Timelines*, the more than six thousand events between 10,000 BC and 1900 AD have been assigned to one of the five continents.

Figure 2-9: Continents’ share of world heritage sites and attention given in two history books.



Sources: UNESCO (2004a), Overy (1999), and Teeple (2002), adapted data.

The spatial distribution of cultural world heritage sites largely coincides with the attention given to the various continents in *The Times history* ( $R^2 = 0.89$ ) and *Timelines* ( $R^2 = 0.83$ ) (figure 2-9). The latter shows another striking feature. The distribution of events over time in *Timelines* (figure 2-10) resembles the age of world heritage sites in different continents (figure 2-6).



#### 2.4.4 Failure of the 'global strategy'

A number of 'imbalances' and 'gaps' have been discerned on the world heritage list by UNESCO (1994: 3), including the over-representation of historic towns, religious buildings, and European sites. And sites from prehistory, the twentieth century and 'living cultures' were thought to be underrepresented. The noted imbalances prompted action, such as the establishment of the World Heritage Centre in Paris, the introduction of the concept of cultural landscapes in 1992 (Pocock 1997a: 267; Rössler 2003: 14), and the implementation of the 'global strategy' in 1994 (Fontein 2000: 41). The harder UNESCO tried to redress these 'imbalances', however, the more the spatial and typological alleged imbalances have grown. This is inferred from four indications. First, thirty-one countries have ratified the convention since 1994, but especially the new European countries have put forward sites. The new European countries have designated four sites on average, new countries on other continents about two. The new countries got seventy-five sites listed, but only three of them deal with the prehistory or an archaeological zone. Apparently, there were initial attempts to include countries with relics from extinct civilisations, at the expense of countries without such remains. Second, European countries make the best use of the opportunities offered by the 'global strategy'. Regardless of whether one looks at cultural landscapes, modern twentieth century heritage, industrial heritage, or prehistoric heritage, Europe benefits most from the opportunity to nominate sites in these categories. Between 1995 and 2003, twenty-nine of the forty-four cultural landscapes (sixty-six percent; see also Fowler 2003: 24), thirteen of the fourteen industrial heritage sites (ninety-three percent; see also Van Hooff 2002: 2-3), seven of the ten modern heritage sites (seventy percent) and four of the eleven prehistoric sites (thirty-six percent) are located in Europe.

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Third, the two kinds of cultural sites that are already sufficiently represented on the world heritage list according to UNESCO – historic towns and religious buildings – still inundate the world heritage list in great numbers. Especially European countries have continued to nominate these sites. They have successfully nominated forty-seven historic towns (fifty-three percent of the total) and twenty-four religious structures (fifty-seven percent of the total) since 1994.

And fourth, the share of natural sites shrunk, from twenty-five percent in the period 1978-1994 to eighteen percent in the period 1995-2003. During its 2000 meeting in Cairns, Australia, the World Heritage Committee changed its tack by introducing a ‘waiting list’. From 2003 onwards, the number of annually inscribed sites was limited to thirty and priority is given to sites in not- or underrepresented countries or regions (UNESCO 2000: 10). It is yet too early to evaluate this new policy.

### **2.5 Conducting country studies**

Countries are the most powerful actor in designating world heritage sites. The aggregated country and continent data as analysed so far, however, does not offer insight into why and how countries select sites. Mexico, for instance, has two natural world heritage sites, which is relatively low for a large and not densely populated country. The motives of various actors in Mexico have to be analysed in more detail to better understand the low number of natural world heritage sites in this country. The large role accorded to the geographical entity ‘country’ within the world heritage convention makes it logical to conduct studies at the level of countries.

#### *2.5.1 Scale level of case studies*

The evaluation of the effectiveness of the world heritage convention is best carried out at two scale levels, the national and the local levels. Both the selection and the preservation of sites depend on the country in which the site is located as well as on the local heritage site. Each country under study is defined as a different case and each case consists of the activities at the national level and site studies at the local level.

Countries that ratified the convention have promised to take necessary steps to better preserve listed sites (Batisse 1992: 16), but primary responsibility rests with the country in which the site is located. The management of sites is likely to vary between countries because of different traditions in managing heritage sites. National parks had existed for more than a century in the United States of America when Yellowstone National Park became a world heritage site. The average Asian national park has been in existence for about thirty years when it becomes a world heritage site.

The research also focuses on the meaning of a listing in the local context. There is a need to look at different kinds of sites, as the impacts of a listing are likely to be site-dependent: “Any analysis of the implications and significance of world heritage status is rendered problematic by the diverse nature of the sites, and is complicated further by the range of contexts in which they are located” (Smith 2003: 108-109).

#### *2.5.2 Case study methodology*

The conducted case studies should contribute to the insight whether different countries nominate the ‘best’ heritage sites and only the ‘best’ for the world heritage list. The research at the national level focuses on the decision makers that work at national

heritage organisations. What are the reasons to nominate certain sites, what are their powers and limitations to nominate certain sites and what actions have been taken at the national level to strengthen the preservation of listed world heritage sites?

The world heritage convention's effectiveness is predominantly evaluated at the local level, as the insight into the impacts of listing – day-to-day preservation and the impact of tourism – are largest at the local level. There are three alternatives for measuring the impacts of a world heritage listing. First, by comparing the situation at a site before and after the listing. Second, by comparing the situation at a site with a comparable non-world heritage site in the same country or region. And, third, by comparing the situation at a world heritage site with the situation at a higher scale-level.

The second and third options meet with more problems than the first one. The second option – comparison with a comparable site – abounds with operational problems. How to find a comparable site when world heritage sites are by definition unique? And, will the world heritage status or other intervening variables, such as location or fame, explain differences between sites? Research based on the third option would yield statistical data, such as the number of visitors at particular sites. This may lead to useful insights, but it would not be sufficient to answer the research questions. Higher visitor numbers after listing are an indication that a world heritage designation leads to more visitors. Field data remain necessary, however, to check that the increase does not follow the opening of a new visitor centre or a new road. Data on the number of visitors have – whenever available – only been used as a check.

The first option has been chosen as the primary method to track the impacts of a world heritage listing. In-depth interviews are conducted at the local level with key actors, often site managers, who could supply information on trends and changes in protection and visitor numbers over a period of time. Ideally, the respondent should be able to give information on management issues from a couple of years before the listing until the present. The respondents should preferably have several years of work experience at the site. In instances when the respondent did not meet that requirement, the researcher interviewed the person that was most appropriate.

The decision to conduct in-depth interviews at two scale levels has impacts on the validity of the research. The validity of the research will increase with an increasing number of cases, but in-depth interviews are also a time-consuming way of data gathering. The 'trade-off' between the wish for a large number of sites and restricted available time has placed some limitations on the validity of the outcomes of the research. First, studied countries – and sites – are restricted to a certain geographical region. And second, not more than one local stakeholder per world heritage site and at most three actors at the national level have been interviewed.

### *2.5.3 Criteria for selecting case studies*

The research was envisioned as an exploratory one, as not much research had yet been done on the selection and impacts of world heritage listings (Jones 1994). Swanborn (1996: 61) recommends keeping the variation between the cases – or the differences between the countries – low in an exploratory research. At the same time, the research should contribute to the understanding of how world heritage works in different kinds of countries. As such a *multiple* case study – a study in more than one country – is the most suitable line of approach.

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Not all 178 countries that ratified the world heritage convention qualify as case studies. The research aims to understand the impacts of a world heritage listing at the local level, so the research is restricted to countries that have at least one world heritage site. The choice between the remaining 129 countries has been made on both pragmatic grounds and reasons concerning the content of the research as Swanborn (1996: 73) advises. One country, the Netherlands, was solely selected for pragmatic reasons. Five criteria for selecting case countries have been formulated, while keeping in mind that it is important to select cases that are thought to produce most insight in the matter of interest (Swanborn 1996: 61).

First, the impacts of a world heritage listing are not expected to happen overnight. Presumably a couple of years will pass by before the legal protection of sites has improved or until world heritage sites are included in tourist guides. A time-lapse of ten years was set to assure that potential effects have taken place. In 2002 – when this criterion was formulated – eighty-six countries had at least one world heritage site.

Second, case study research is expected to deliver the most valid and reliable information when this is done at more than one site. Validity increases when similar patterns are found at more sites (see also Turtinen 2000: 8). No absolute number can be calculated and the exact number is not a paramount issue (Hamel *et al.* 1993: 34-35), but the minimum number of researched world heritage sites per country was limited to six. Therefore, the number of countries that qualify shrunk to twenty-four.

Third, case countries should have at least one natural and one cultural world heritage site, as research at various kinds of sites will result in more robust findings that are applicable to a larger range of sites (Schofield 2000: 79-80). Other classifications can be made – such as hominid sites, industrial sites, rock art sites, cultural landscapes and historic cities and towns (UNESCO 2004a) – but in this research the choice was made for the most basic division of sites. This reduced the number of potential sites to nineteen.

Fourth, the need for geographical restrictions led to the prerequisite that countries should be located in a limited number of continents. A more pragmatic prerequisite was then added. It would be helpful if the researcher – who speaks Dutch and English – could effectively communicate with the respondents in at least a number of countries. The focus of the research was directed at the three continents of Europe, North America, and Latin America. This criterion reduced the number of possible countries to twelve (table 2-1).

And fifth, countries should possess different characteristics regarding their political, cultural and economic circumstances. Different domestic circumstances are liable to have an impact on the reason behind nomination of sites and the ability to preserve world heritage sites. The country's political organisation – federal or non-federal – might affect whether world heritage sites will be spatially concentrated or evenly distributed. Political changes might influence a country's willingness to participate in the convention. The inclusion of countries with different cultures or multi-cultural societies will make clear whether all groups have access to the world heritage list. Varying economic circumstances will have an influence as well, as poor and rich countries – identified according to their gross domestic product (GDP) per capita – are likely to have different aims in nominating sites. Another issue to be looked at is whether or not economically poor countries receive foreign help to enable them to preserve their world heritage sites better.

Table 2-1: Overview of countries that qualify as case studies.

	Country	Continent	Cultural sites in 1992	Natural sites in 1992	Total sites in 1992	GDP/capita in 1998 (€)
1	France	Europe	19	1	20	18244
2	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Europe</i>	16	1	17	13726
3	USA	North America	8	9	17	25146
4	Greece	Europe	13	2	15	12135
5	UK	Europe	11	3	14	17470
6	Canada	North America	4	6	10	19620
7	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>Latin America</i>	9	1	10	6407
8	Peru	Latin America	6	4	10	3595
9	Bulgaria	Europe	7	2	9	4027
10	Turkey	Europe	7	2	9	5671
11	Brazil	Latin America	7	1	8	5556
12	<i>Poland</i>	<i>Europe</i>	5	1	6	6487

Note: Finally selected case studies are in italics.

Sources: UNESCO (2004a) and Wolters-Noordhoff (2001: 207-212).

Ultimately the United Kingdom and the United States of America were selected for their high GDP per capita and the varying perceptions over time in the usefulness of UNESCO. These two countries, together with Spain, can be labelled as federal countries. Spain is also selected as it had – together with Italy – the most world heritage sites in 2002 (thirty-six). The country also has several population groups with a distinct cultural identity, such as the Catalans, the Galicians and the Basques. Finally, Mexico and Poland were chosen, as they are relatively poor. Also the presence of different population groups – Indian, white and mestizo – makes Mexico an interesting case. The different political ideologies in Poland before and after 1990 could give insight in the effectiveness of the convention under various political systems. Furthermore, another consideration was whether heritage sites in areas that until the Second World War belonged to Germany (Prussia) would be just as eligible for a world heritage listing as the heritage sites in the historic core of Poland.

#### 2.5.4 Executing and analysing case studies

The case studies were carried out between November 2002 and December 2003, and in the following order: the Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States of America, Mexico, Poland and Spain (see appendix 1 for a detailed overview of interviewed organisations and dates). Most of Yin's (1994: 78) identified sources of information have been used – documents, interviews, direct observation, archival records, participant observation, and physical artefacts – but the emphasis was on conducting focus, or in-depth, interviews. Translators assisted during the case studies in Mexico, Poland and Spain. The large number of cases – sixty-seven sites at the local level and twelve organisations at the national level – made it helpful to derive the questions from a case study protocol (Yin 1994: 84).

In the first four countries examined, all except five world heritage sites listed by 1992 and situated on the mainland were included. The Tower of London was left out, as it was hard to get in touch with the management of the site. Redwood National Park and



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Chaco Culture National Historic Park had to be omitted because of the three-week period allotted for case study. The same applied to the historic centre of Mexico City and El Tajín in Mexico.

An important omission became clear after the first four case studies. The criterion that only sites listed before 1992 would be included in the research excluded an important category from the research, the recently listed sites. These sites are different in that they have often applied for the world heritage status themselves, frequently for other reasons than pride alone. The inclusion of this category of sites was necessary to understand comprehensively the dynamics of the effectiveness of the world heritage convention. Accordingly, more recently listed sites were also included in the cases of Poland and Spain.

In Poland, all world heritage sites were researched, except two sites which were listed the latest – the churches of peace in Jawor and Świdnica and the wooden churches of Southern Little Poland, listed in 2001 and 2003. The inclusion of ‘newer’ sites necessitated a new selection approach in Spain, as it would be practically impossible to study all thirty-eight world heritage sites. The focus on six autonomous regions on the mainland – Catalunya, La Rioja, Castilla y León, Galicia, Comunidad de Madrid, and Andalucía – reduced the number of possible sites significantly. No site could be selected from Euskadi (*Basque country*), as there is no world heritage site in this autonomous region. The final selection of sites was made according to the principle that both single monument and city centres, as well as earlier and later listed sites should be included.

Almost all respondents allowed the interviews to be taped and all interviews have been transcribed. The results of the interviews have been analysed by using NUD\*IST, a computer package to analyse qualitative data. The insight gained from these case studies will be discussed in the following three chapters.